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DE RUEHNR #1224/01 0751028
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0368
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 8115
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//OSD//
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 001224

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/16/2026
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SUBJECT: SOMALIA: IGAD SUMMIT IN NAIROBI RISKS UPSTAGING
SOMALI PARLIAMENT

CLASSIFIED BY ACTING POL COUNSELOR LISA PETERSON, REASONS
1.4 (B,D)

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) Somali politicians fear that the upcoming summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) may repeat the mistakes of March 2005. The specter that Somali President Yusuf may again ask IGAD to express readiness to deploy foreign troops from neighboring countries to Somalia, in the absence of a request from the Somali Parliament, leaves open a risk of IGAD again catalyzing the cleaving of the Transitional Federal Institutions into irreconcilable factions. High tensions in Mogadishu, with clan-based militias ready to fight over nearly anything, could quickly explode into combat on the question of a perceived, imminent "Ethiopian invasion". END SUMMARY

SUMMIT AGENDA

2. (SBU) Somali affairs will figure prominently on the agenda of the 25th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers (March 17-18), and on that of the 11th Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government that follows on March 20 (both in Nairobi). The African Union set the stage January 25th with its Summit decision on a possible deployment of an IGAD Peace Support Mission to Somalia (known as IGASOM). The AU made explicit reference to the need for an exemption of the United Nations arms embargo imposed on Somalia under UNSCR 733 (1992) in order for any peace support mission to operate inside Somalia. Observers are concerned that IGAD will now pronounce as to whether it is prepared with a detailed mission plan for such a deployment.

HOW IT IS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN

3. (SBU) The UN Security Council's March 10, 2006 deliberations on Somalia produced a draft Presidential Statement (PRST) that proposes a sequence of actions needed for a peace support mission to deploy to Somalia. In it,

the UNSC reiterates the urgent need for the Somali Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) to finalize an agreed national security and stabilization plan (NSSP). Should the NSSP in fact include the need for a peace support mission, then "the AU and IGAD is to work out a detailed mission plan in close coordination with and with the broad consensus of the TFIs (Transitional Federal Institutions) and consistent with the national security and stabilization plan". At that point, the draft PRST states that UNSC would stand ready to consider an exemption to the UNSCR 733 arms embargo.

DEJA VU

14. (SBU) Observers call attention to the similarities between this situation and that which held in March 2005. At that time, the TFIs were still located in Nairobi. President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed had requested a peace support mission force of 20,000 men -- without the authority to do so under the Transitional Federal Charter. The TFP was deeply divided over the issue, seeing Yusuf's request as opening the door to an invasion of Ethiopian troops. The USG demarched regional states, and announced publicly, that "The United States shares the concerns of the International community and many Somalis regarding the introduction of foreign troops into Somalia ... Somalia's neighbors have legitimate national interests [...] however, any external force should exclude troops from these countries." (Press Statement of the Department's Spokesman of March 3, 2005).

15. (SBU) The IGAD Heads of State met the morning of March 17, 2005, and endorsed an IGAD deployment plan that included dominant roles for troops from Ethiopia and Djibouti. That same evening, a plenary session of the TFP collapsed in a

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televised brawl and chair-throwing session over whether to endorse the IGASOM proposal. The TFP would not come together in a plenary session for another 11 months.

STILL NO VOICE
OF THE BROAD CONSENSUS

16. (SBU) The TFP ended 11 months of stalemate on February 26, 2006 meeting in extraordinary session inside Somalia. The subject of an IGASOM deployment is resurrected at each meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers, and in deliberations of the African Union, despite the fact that many Somali politicians think the issue has been set aside. TFP members believe that the Somali Parliament must consider, debate, and approve a National Security and Stabilization Plan (NSSP) as a preliminary to any deployment planning for a foreign peace support mission. Since a NSSP is not yet before the TFP, there should be nothing for the IGAD Heads of State to discuss.

17. (SBU) President Yusuf, however, is rumored to again be discussing with IGAD neighbors the intervention of their troops to stabilize Somalia. The rumors have gathered considerable steam since the February 18-24 on-and-off fighting in Mogadishu among clan-based militias representing the "Alliance to Restore Peace and Combat against International Terrorism", and the "Council for Uprising and Defending the Religion and the People." Somalis and some international community members point out that it was the lawlessness of Mogadishu that was Yusuf's justification for seeking foreign military assistance in the first place. They note that it is the same Hawiye clan warlords that have again turned the capital into a war zone.

THEY'RE ALREADY THERE

18. (SBU) The Somali rumor mill is also reporting that large numbers of Ethiopian troops are on heightened alert,

positioned both on and over the border with Somalia. An AMCIT employee of an international NGO, traveling March 11-15 in Gedo region, reported that his staff is completely convinced that large numbers of Ethiopian troops are present in Dolow, Ethiopia, "awaiting an invitation from the TFG to the AU to send in troops." He reported in a March 15 email to Somalia Watcher having observed himself small numbers of Ethiopian troops in the Somali town of Dolow (the two towns are just across the Ethiopia-Somali border from each other). He noted that this was not unusual, "but their presence is now much more open than it has been for a number of years."

COMMENT

19. (C) Somalia Watcher has encouraged contacts in the Kenyan Government, and others close to the President and Prime Minister, to urge the two leaders -- seen to be closest to Ethiopia -- to consider the sequence of events set out in a series of UNSC Presidential Statements before asking for an IGASOM deployment without Parliamentary approval. The specter of an IGAD Summit Communique once again providing the catalyst for the TFIs to descend into division has a number of political actors on edge as the Summit date approaches. With tensions very high in Mogadishu, and the fear of an "Ethiopian Invasion" a cause celebre among a broad cross section of Somali society -- not to mention the country's Islamists and Jihadis -- we must hope that the IGAD Foreign Ministers and Heads of State approach their drafting exercise with real care. END COMMENT.

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